DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 264 182 SP 026 660

AUTHOR Saunders, Robert L.
TITLE Memphis State University's New Five-year Program For the Initial Preparation of Teachers.
PUB DATE Mar 85
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Higher Education; Internship Programs; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Program Development; Program Length; Teacher Education Curriculum; *Teacher Education Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Extended Programs; *Memphis State University TN

ABSTRACT

A description is presented of a new extended teacher education program at Memphis State University. Instituted in 1985, the program has four objectives: (1) to develop and implement an extended (five-year) program covering all areas of teacher preparation, with institutional recommendation for certification coming only after completion of the total program, which would terminate in the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree; (2) existing graduate degree programs typically completed by education practitioners will be redesigned to ensure that these programs visibly and clearly incorporate the standards of performance included in the Tennessee Career Ladder Plan for teachers, counselors, and administrators; (3) procedures and programs will be designed to increase the College's responsiveness to inservice needs of professional practitioners; and (4) the performance effectiveness of certificated educators having completed the new teacher education model will be ascertained through carefully designed research procedures. The centerpiece of the overall plan is the development of a five-year program for the initial preparation of teachers. A description is given of how the new program is being developed, the reasons for it, and several major benefits expected to accrue once it is in full operation. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

AUG 22 1985

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Saunders

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED264182

Memphis State University's New Five-year Program For the Initial Preparation of Teachers

Robert L. Saunders, Dean
College of Education
Memphis State University

Background

No state has been more heavily involved than Tennessee in the debate about schools' shortcomings and what is needed to improve them. Intensive debate took place within the state following Governor Lamar Alexander's presentation of a bold and comprehensive Better Schools Program in January, 1983. The debate reached a crescendo on March 6, 1984, when Governor Lamar Alexander signed into law the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 and a Public School Governance Act which established a new state board of education with a significantly different composition, role and function.

Among the several major provisions of the sweeping legislation were the creation of a career ladder program for teachers and administrators and a set of more rigorous requirements and expectations for teacher education programs in the state. Both actions reflected the public's apparent strong desire for improved schools and for better prepared teachers and administrators - and both posed significant implications for teacher education programs within the state.

The College of Education at Memphis State University supported and participated in the proposed legislation and tracked its progress

SP 026 660

closely. Even before final passage of CERA, the College had developed a position from which it could respond quickly and positively to the clearly expressed desire to improve schools and the preparation of teachers. In January, 1984, the College announced a four-part plan of action, as follows. The action plan was four-fold:

1. A decision was made to develop and implement an extended (five-year) program covering all areas of teacher preparation, with institutional recommendation for certification coming only after completion of the total program, which would terminate in the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree.

2. Existing graduate degree programs typically completed by education practitioners (M.Ed. and Ed.S.) would be redesigned to ensure that these programs visibly and clearly incorporate the standards of performance included in the Tennessee Career Ladder Plan for teachers, counselors, administrators.

3. Procedures and programs would be designed to increase the College's responsiveness to the inservice needs of professional practitioners, using workshops, regular courses, and a variety of non-credit service activities designed to assist in the upgrading of performance in accordance with career ladder expectations.

4. The performance effectiveness of certificated educators having completed the new teacher education model would be ascertained through carefully designed research procedures. The findings of this research would be used to strengthen the new programs from year to year and would be disseminated to those agencies, institutions, and individuals in Tennessee and elsewhere interested in the improvement of preparation programs for professional educators.

The centerpiece of the overall plan was part one, i.e., the

development of a five-year program for the initial preparation of teachers. With this in mind, and aware also of the provision within CERA for the establishment of Centers of Excellence within state universities, a decision was made to pursue the goals stated above through a broad-based approach consistent with the nature and purpose of the Centers of Excellence Program. An unsuccessful proposal was submitted in the first round of applications. A second proposal was submitted in October, 1984, and was approved for funding by THEC on January 25, 1985.

Although funding for the Center won't begin until July 1, 1985, implementation of the new five-year program began in the 1984 fall semester, since the decision was made in December, 1983, to extend the teacher education program with or without Center funding.

The remainder of this article describes how the new program is being developed, the reasons for it, and several major benefits expected to accrue once it is in full operation.

A Description of the New Program

Effective in the 1984 fall semester, entering students intending to teach in one or more of the traditional subject fields in the secondary grades were counseled to enroll in the College of Arts and Science and complete a baccalaureate degree in the department in which their chosen teaching field is offered as a major. Effective in the fall of 1985, entering students planning to teach in any other secondary education field or in subjects organized on a K-12 basis (e.g., art, music, special education) will be counseled likewise.

Effective in the fall of 1986, entering students preparing to teach in the elementary grades will have the option to pursue the

traditional baccalaureate degree in education or enter the five-year program plan. Elementary education majors electing the five-year option will have most of their pedagogical studies postponed until the fifth year of study, thereby enabling them to complete substantially more courses in the several academic fields typically included in the teaching responsibilities of elementary school teachers. The current four-year program in elementary education will continue for three years at which time a decision will be made to (a) continue both options, (b) continue only the M.A.T. option, or (c) continue only the four-year program.

Successful completion of the fifth year of study will culminate in the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree and will include a full-time, nine-months internship which will also count as the probationary teaching year. Recommendations for certification as an apprentice teacher will be made only upon completion of the M.A.T. degree.

The M.A.T. degree program will contain a generic core of pedagogical studies including the following major areas of content:

1. The social, philosophical, theoretical foundations of education with emphasis on current trends, issues, and problems in education, multicultural considerations, and the role of schools and teachers in American society.

2. Principles of human development and learning theory applied to teaching.

3. Handicapping and exceptional conditions of students and their implication for teaching and learning.

4. Interaction and intervention strategies with students, parents, teachers, and other professionals.

5. Intructional strategies and materials (including computer usage and the utilization of other media and technology), reading in the content field, classroom organization and management, measurement and evaluation, and curriculum planning, strategies and resources applicable to the field(s) of teaching specialization.

The full-time, nine-months internship under a Career Level III "Master" teacher will incorporate instruction in specialized curriculum and pedagogy concurrent with direct teaching responsibilities.

The M.A.T. degree -program may be completed over a 15-month period. Students will be admitted only once a year, in June, and will proceed through the program in clusters of approximately 20 persons. Campus based instruction will occur during the two summer sessions and in late afternoon - evening courses during the fall and spring semesters.

The minimum requirement for the M.A.T. will be 45 semester hours. Approximately half of the professional studies will be completed on campus in generic courses with certain laboratory applications targeted for completion during the full year internship. College of Education faculty will work with the interns and their Level III teacher/mentors in ways similar to those currently employed in the student teaching program. Faculty from the intern's teaching specialty will be members of each intern's mentoring team. Interns will be paid stipends of approximately two-thirds of the salary of a beginning teacher.

As a condition of graduation from the program and in order to attain teacher certification in Tennessee, students will be required to meet the state- prescribed minimum score on the "Core Battery tests" of the National Teacher Examination. The appropriate "Specialty Area test" of the National Teacher Examinations may be required later. Interns whose stipends are paid by the State must teach two years in a Tennessee public school or repay the amount of the stipend. Graduates of the five-year program will be eligible for

employment as apprentice teachers, having used the internship year to complete requirements for the probationary year now required in Tennessee of all graduates of four-year programs.

Benefits Expected

The primary benefits expected from the new program are summarized below.

1. The five-year program model frees up valuable life space at the baccaluareate level now devoted to professional studies for use in the chosen teaching field(s) and in general education. Liberal studies (general education and teaching fields(s) are increased about 25% for secondary education majors and about 30% for elementary students when compared to the current B.S.Ed. and M.Ed. programs combined. Note: This comparison is used because it is intended that the performance level of graduates of the extended program will be equal to that attained by those graduates of the prior preparation models that included a master's degree in addition to the baccalaureate degree in education. The internship/clinical component is increased from 83 to 144% for elementary students and 144% for secondary students when compared to the current four-year program plus the masters degree.

Professional studies, excluding the internship, are reduced 41-45% for secondary and 39% for elementary teachers when compared to the combined B.S.Ed. and M.Ed. programs. The reduction in professional education is justified largely on the belief that the student who has completed an undergraduate degree program with high marks can accelerate his/her pedagogical training as a graduate student and thereby use the freed-up life space in the undergradate program for more studies in academic fields. Thus, while the overall

number of hours that students will take in a five-year period is not increased over what they now take in a combined B.S.Ed. and M.Ed. program, the distribution of those hours is changed substantially.

2. As implied above, pedagogical training will be delivered at a higher level of sophistication and in a more accelerated fashion, thus enabling students to enter the teaching profession with higher-level performance skills than formerly attained by graduates of undergraduate degree programs, even though fewer credit hours will be devoted to studies in professional education.

3. The longer and more intensified internship (a full year under exemplary, "master" teachers) will enable students to benefit more from the internship than is presently the case. This change is expected to result in teacher training enjoying increased respect and credibility with public school educators as a consequence of their having become true partners in the preparationn of preservice teachers.

4. The new program will sharply reduce if not totally eliminate the need for on-campus, specialized pedagogical courses for preservice students, thereby reducing some rather difficult scheduling and staffing problems occasioned in recent years by declining enrollments in most teaching fields.

5. Completion of a liberal studies undergraduate degree for secondary teachers as a condition for admission to an intensive graduate-level teacher preparation component will elevate both the status and image of teacher education, as it has for other professions that use similar models, such as law, medicine, veterinary medicine, clinical psychology, etc.

6. Accountability for the preparation of teachers will be shared

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

more convincingly with many faculty throughout the University, enhancing the likelihood of an increased sense of ownership, enthusiasm and respect for teacher education throughout the University.

SUMMARY

It is appropriate and logical for Memphis State University, the most comprehensive university in the State Board of Regents system and one of two institutions designated by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission as comprehensive regional institutions, to take the lead in improving the quality and level of preservice teacher training in the state and to help develop a prototypic model which other institutions might wish to replicate. This undertaking, at a time when too few students with high academic ability are choosing to enter the teaching profession, should enhance both the quality and image of education in all of West Tennessee and ultimately in the entire state. By deciding to prepare teachers only through a five-year model, Memphis State joins a small group of institutions (less than a half dozen) throughout the country who are pioneering development of the next generation of teacher education models. It is a bold step and not without risks. But risk taking is appropriate because the present model is a half century old and is demonstrably inadequate to prepare teachers for the rest of this century and into the next one.

No serious observer of education today believes that the today's four-year model is an extravagance. But when two-year models began giving way to four-year models back in the 1920s and 30s, there were many skeptics and doomsayers. Will serious observers think in the year 2000 that five-year programs in teacher education are an

extravagance? Not likely, when it is remembered that new teachers entering classrooms for the first time this year will, if they make a full career of teaching, spend more than half their career teaching in the 21st Century!

The establishment of lighthouse programs in teacher education is not unlike the way Johns Hopkins University, at the turn of the century, developed a lighthouse medical education program based on the then recently completed Flexner Report and with funding by the Carnegie Fund. By the year 2000 the lighthouse program being established now might be viewed in like manner.

RLS/rb
March, 1985